



**U.S. Department of Justice  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Western District of Texas**

**Johnny Sutton, U.S. Attorney**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**JURY CONVICTS TEN MEMBERS OF ARYAN CIRCLE ON FEDERAL DRUG CHARGES**

**United States Attorney Johnny Sutton** announced this afternoon that a federal jury returned guilty verdicts on all charges against ten Odessa, Texas, area residents—all of whom are members of the Aryan Circle—on federal drug charges. 19 defendants charged in this case entered guilty pleas prior to trial. These 29 convictions highlight the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Western District of Texas's effort to dismantle organized criminal enterprises while helping to reduce the demand for drugs in West Texas.

"Today's verdict is a victory for the people of the Permian Basin," stated **United States Attorney Johnny Sutton**. "Thanks to the hard work of local, state and federal law enforcement in West Texas, this white supremacist gang will be held accountable for the crimes."

The jury found Charles Samson, Michael Lewis, Victor Wesley Tucker, and Malachi David Wren guilty of Continuing Criminal Enterprise involving more than 15,000 grams of a substance or mixture containing methamphetamine. As a result, these four defendants face mandatory life sentences in federal prison. Samson, Lewis, Tucker, Wren, Jerry Beason, Leonard Griffith, Shane Samson, Michael Martin, Buddy Ford and Donnie Thompson were all convicted of Conspiracy to Manufacture, Distribute, and Possess with Intent to Distribute more than 500 grams of a substance or mixture containing methamphetamine. As a result, these defendants face a mandatory minimum sentence of 10 years up to life in federal prison.

Testimony during the 13-day trial revealed that Samson, Lewis, and Tucker served as District Captains at various times from January 2000 through March 2004. Griffith is an Aryan Circle Vice President and member of the Inner Ring, the governing board of the overall Aryan Circle. By the sheer number of Aryan Circle and voluntary non-Aryan Circle methamphetamine cooks in the area, the organization tried to corner the methamphetamine distribution market in Odessa. They succeeded to a great extent by capturing or controlling approximately 80% of the methamphetamine trade. The Aryan Circle members also used extortion, robbery and intimidation against non-Aryan Circle methamphetamine cooks to force them to turn over part of their product as a "tax" or sell their entire product to Aryan Circle members. The entire criminal enterprise conservatively cooked and distributed 31 kilograms of methamphetamine from January 2000 through March 2004.

This case resulted from a West Texas Joint Terrorism Task Force investigation conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Odessa Police Department, along with the Ector County Sheriff's Office, Midland County Sheriff's Office, Midland Police Department, Texas Department of Public Safety, West Texas Narcotics Enforcement Task Force, Andrews Police Department, Andrews County Sheriff's Office, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission, San Angelo Police Department, Schleicher County Sheriff's Office, Drug Enforcement Administration, Crane County Sheriff's Office and Crane Police Department. This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Mark Roomberg and Glenn Roque-Jackson.

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